

Ethical Fashion – a survey

Objectives

- Project objective - How to increase awareness and understanding of ethical fashion
- Survey objective – understand the current awareness of ethical fashion among students of Applied Imagination
- Discover insights that may lead to further researches and speeding up the development of ethical fashion

The Survey

- 10 questions
- Distributed through Survey Monkey
- 38 responses were received – 77% of total

Findings - General

1. Most respondents (61%) spend below GBP1,000 on clothing per year. 30.7% spend GBP1,000 – 3,000
2. Due to the nature of a limited sample, most respondents are below 34 years of age
3. Most respondents (92%) chose comfort and quality of fabric as the main reason for buying their clothing, followed by design and style (89%) and cost (82%). Less than half bought clothes due to brand awareness (47%)

Findings – Ethical fashion

- More than half (56%) believe that ethical fashion is the future of fashion, while 33% believe that it is a marketing gimmick.
- Most relate ethical fashion to labour safety, working hours and working conditions (92%); followed by fair labour wage (79%).
- Interestingly, more respondents (74%) think recycled fabric means more than long lasting, durable fabrics (68%)
- Transparent supply chain (82%) scores the highest when it comes to the promotion of ethical fashion brands; followed by disclosing identity of manufacturers (61%) and having a third party audit report (58%)
- Most respondents say they would support ethical fashion brand at a higher price given similar style, quality and comfort

Ethical fashion – awareness and promotion

1. Only 11% of the respondents had never heard of ethical fashion
2. Most respondents believe that social media with endorsement from a famous influencer is the most effective way to promote ethical fashion (95%); followed by fashion magazine (55%), TV and the Web (37%)

Insights and learnings

To most people, ethical fashion relates to people and the environment. Firstly, the fair treatment of the labours who manufacture these items is by far the most important. Transparent supply chain is the most credible way of proving supplier ethics. Among these respondents, using recycled and durable fabric is also an attribute to reduce the environmental impact of the fashion industry.

However, some people believe that ethical fashion is a marketing gimmick while many others think that it is the future of fashion. They do not necessarily contradict one another. With sufficient disclosure and transparency on what fashion producers do to give fair treatment to their workers and to protect the environment, the trust in ethical fashion can be greatly enhanced.

The good news is that consumers are willing to spend more on ethically produced clothing given similar quality, style and comfort. Ethical fashion can make commercial sense.

Apart from how to create an ethical fashion industry, promoting it may be a problem. Most respondents believe that promotion using social media with famous influence would be the most effective tool.

Limitations

1. The sample group belongs to the same institution. As such, results may be representative for those with similar backgrounds.
2. There are insufficient samples to further analyse results by age group, spending and gender.

Next steps

Three Directions:

1. Acquire the help of fashion brands that are committed to ethical fashion to further this research
2. Work with ethical fashion interest groups to promote the concept of ethical fashion to suppliers and consumers
3. Research on how credibility may be cultivated for ethical fashion to be used by fashion companies, including making supply chain transparent, use of environmentally friendly fabrics either by recycling or inventing, certification by regulators, use of technology (such as blockchain) to facilitate trust building

Thank you!